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ABSTRACT

Two methods used to collect follow-up data on vocational education graduates to determine their postgraduate occupational and educational activities are (1) to ask the graduates themselves and (2) to ask the teachers to report the status of their graduates. The objective of this study was to compare data that was collected using each method and determine if the system used by Oklahoma (teachers reporting) was accurate and adequate considering the costs of each method. Questionnaires were mailed to 1,215 graduates; 413 usable questionnaires were returned. From the information provided by the graduates, codes were assigned to each individual, teacher reports for those same graduates were compared, and the percentage of exact agreement between the teacher responses and the student responses was calculated. Findings indicated that teachers were still doing an adequate job of reporting student status information, and it was recommended that the teacher follow-up be continued rather than changing to the more costly and time-consuming method of student follow-up. Frequency tables of responses are included in this report and a sample graduate questionnaire and the follow-up instrument sent to teachers are appended. (BL)

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PARALLEL FOLLOW-UP

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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State Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation
Stillwater, Oklahoma
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INTRODUCTION

An integral part of vocational and technical education is the follow-up of vocational graduates to determine their post-graduate occupational and educational activities. Student follow-up data is important in determining accountability of vocational programs. Two methods that can be used to collect follow-up data on graduates are (1) to ask the graduates themselves, and (2) to ask the teachers to report the status of their graduates.

PURPOSE

The method that is currently being used in Oklahoma is to have the teachers report the status of their graduates. This method is highly refined and assures a one hundred percent return because the teachers are required by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education to provide the information. A disadvantage of this method is that information supplied by the teachers is secondhand and may be old or incorrect. Teacher error could be eliminated by contacting all graduates and asking them about their current occupational and educational activities. This method would provide more accurate data, but it is obvious that it would involve more time, expense, and personnel in order to obtain sufficient results.

The objective of this study is to determine if the present system of gathering follow-up data is adequate considering the costs of methods involved. This study compares data that was collected using each method. An assumption of this study was that graduates when contacted would accurately report their activities after graduation.

PROCEDURE

Population

The population was defined to be all graduates of secondary vocational-technical programs for the 1975-76 school year. There were 15,676 graduates included in the files of the Student Accounting System for the Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

Survey Population

The Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education is subdivided into divisions. In previous studies, proportional allocation was applied to the different divisions to obtain an adequate division sample. But based on results presented in the Parallel Follow-up of 1973 graduates, there was no evidence to suggest any reporting discrepancies among divisions. Therefore, all divisions were combined and the necessary sample size was computed.

A sample size of 413 was necessary to estimate our proportion within plus or minus four percent with ninety percent confidence. Anticipating a response rate of forty percent, the sample size was inflated to compensate for nonrespondents. This inflation resulted in a final sample size of 1215 graduates. A systematic sampling technique was used to collect the names of graduates from the Student Accounting System's records. The sample was obtained by randomly selecting one of the first twelve students as a starting point and every twelfth student after that.

Collection of Data

The sample included graduates from high schools and area schools throughout Oklahoma. Each school was contacted and requested to supply the current mailing address of their graduates that were selected to participate in the survey. Once the current addresses were received, graduates were sent a cover letter and questionnaire (Appenxdix I). The first mailing was followed at three week intervals by second and third reminders. After three mailings, a total of 413 usable questionnaires were received. The secondary graduate survey was conducted during fall 1976 and winter 1976-77.

Student Follow-up Report

The questionnaire sent to the graduates requested specific information on their educational or employment status during the week of October 3-9, 1976, including their major in post-secondary education and their duties if employed. From the information provided by the graduates, appropriate follow-up codes were assigned to each individual. Questionnaires that were not deliverable were coded unknown.

Teacher Follow-up Report

Each year vocational-technical teachers are requested to provide student information to the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. The student status request coded information of graduates as of October first each year. (The instrument used to collect teacher data is in Appendix II.)

ANALYSIS

The codes that were assigned graduates were compared with the responses the teachers reported for each individual graduate. Comparison of the data was based on the following system:

(1) All eighteen possible status codes.
(2) nine codes for students who completed the program, excluding unknowns. (working vs. non-working)
(3) the nine codes combined into four categories:
    A,B working full time related
    C,D working non-related
    E,F continuing education full time
    G,H,I not in the labor force
(4) The nine codes combined into two categories:
    A,B,C,D available for employment
    E,F,G,H,I not available for employment

A description of all student status codes may be found in Appendix II.

The percentage of exact agreement between the teachers' responses and the students' responses was calculated for each of the comparisons. A Chi-Square test was also performed on each comparison.

RESULTS

Presented in the following tables are a comparison of student and teacher responses on status codes. The numbers along the principal diagonal (upper left to lower right) represent exact agreement between teacher and student. Entries off the principal diagonal represent areas of disagreement between student and teacher responses. Chi-Square values are given for each table along with the probability, p, that this observed value will not be exceeded. The hypothesis being tested is that the two methods of classification are independent.

The following example illustrates how to read the frequency tables. Suppose we are interested in the variation of teacher responses for student status code E. We read down the left margin to code E, and observe in the right margin that teachers coded one hundred twenty-seven students as continuing education full time in a related vocational-technical field. By reading horizontally across this row, we are able to obtain a breakdown of teacher responses according to what the graduates reported they were doing. We see that eight graduates were code A, three were code B, five were code C, three were code D, sixty were code E, etc. Since sixty is along the principal diagonal, sixty teacher responses agreed exactly with the student responses. To find the percentage of exact agreement as related to teacher responses, the entry along the principal diagonal is divided by the respective total of teacher responses for that row. For this example, we would divide 60 by 127 for a forty-seven percent agreement of teacher and student responses.

TABLE I
Student Response

Teacher Response	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	S	U	Totals
A	45	22	15	3	6	4	2	2	5	0	1	0	0	1	24	8	0	0	138
B	8	10	18	3	2	6	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	0	17	3	1	0	76
C	2	1	18	4	0	4	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	46
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
E	8	3	5	3	60	20	0	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	17	3	0	0	127
F	2	0	1	3	4	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	0	36
G	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
H	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	24
I	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	16
J	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8
K	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	6
L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
O	1	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	10
P	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
S	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	4	1	1	0	25
U	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	11	0	0	1	18
	72	40	71	21	79	59	5	10	40	1	3	4	3	2	113	23	2	1	549

$X^2 = 1006.62$ $p = .9999$

Table I shows the overall results of the study. By adding up the numbers in the principal diagonal and dividing by the total number of observations, we obtain the percentage of exact agreement between the two methods of classification. Thirty-one percent of the repsonses agree exactly in Table I. Since there is such a high probability that the observed Chi-Square value will not be exceeded, the stated hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that the two methods of classification are dependent, i.e. there is no significant difference in the way students and teachers respond to follow-up questions.

An analysis of code *O* by teacher response can be made from Table I. Student questionnaires that were not deliverable and returned to the Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education were coded unknown, student status code *O*. There were one hundred thirteen nonresponses in this category. Teachers coded the majority of students as follows: twenty-four working full time in an occupation for which they were trained, seventeen working full time in a related occupation, seventeen continuing education after high school full time in a related vocational-technical field, fifteen reported unknown, and an average of three graduates in the remaining categories.

The following results are based on the 360 responses for graduates included in the codes A-I. When the nine codes were compared, there were 161 cases, approximately forty-five percent, where the teacher's response was in exact agreement with the student's response. For four categories, sixty-three percent of the responses were in exact agreement. Approximately seventy-eight percent, or 279 responses, agreed for the final reduction of two categories.

A Chi-Square test, to test the null hypothesis that the two methods of classification are independent, was rejected for each comparison. Therefore, we may conclude that the two methods are dependent and not significantly different from each other.

From Table II, it can be seen that there is wide disagreement between teacher responses and student responses. One hundred four students were reported by the teachers to be working full time in the occupation for which trained. Forty-five of those same 104 students were actually working full time in the occupation for which trained, twenty-two were working full time in a related occupation, fifteen were working full time in an unrelated occupation, and all others were in the remaining categories. Teachers reported fifty-four students as working full time in a related occupation. The biggest variation among these students is that eighteen reported they were working full time in an unrelated occupation, while only ten were actually working full time in a related occupation.

TABLE II A
Nine Categories

Teacher Response	Student Response									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Totals
A	45	22	15	3	6	4	2	2	5	104
B	8	10	18	3	2	6	0	0	7	54
C	2	1	18	4	0	4	1	0	5	35
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
E	8	3	5	3	60	20	0	0	7	106
F	2	0	1	3	4	17	0	0	0	27
G	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
H	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	4	5	18
I	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	7	12
Totals	68	39	61	16	73	54	3	9	37	360

$X^2 = 396.568$ $p = .9999$

TABLE II B
Percentages of Exact Agreement as Related to Teacher Responses

	Category								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Percent %	43.3	18.5	51.4	0.0	56.6	63.0	0.0	22.2	58.3

The largest percentage of exact agreement within categories occurs for continuing education after high school full time in an unrelated vocational-technical or other field, status code F. Twenty-seven students were reported by teachers to be in this category, with 17 students actually in this category. This is an exact agreement of sixty-three percent for teacher responses. For the category continuing education after high school full time in a related vocational-technical field, status code E, there was an exact agreement of approximately fifty-seven percent. Sixty out of 106 teacher responses agreed with the student responses. The high percentages in these two categories could be accounted for by the occurrence of only two codes for continuing education, whereas there are four status codes for graduates who are working.

TABLE III presents results for the reduction of nine categories into four categories. This reduction eliminates some bias caused by the classifying of certain occupations as being related to training or relating to an occupation for which a student was trained. There is still bias present, though, as thirty-nine graduates working in a non-related occupation were reported by teachers to be working full time in a related occupation.

The highest percentage of exact agreement in this table occurs for the category labeled continuing education full time. Approximately seventy-six percent of all graduates that teachers reported as continuing their education were in school. An additional nineteen percent were actually working, while the remaining five percent were not in the labor force.

The results in this table also indicate that teachers have a tendency to code students as working in a related field when they are working in a non-related field. Teachers coded 158 graduates as working in a related field and thirty-seven as working in a non-related field. From student responses, there were only 107 working in a related field, but seventy-seven were working in a non-related field. Therefore, teachers coded fifty-one students too many as working in a related field and forty students too few as working in a non-related field.

TABLE III A
Four Categories

A,B Working full time related
C,D Working non-related
E,F Continuing education full time
G,H,I Not in labor force

Teacher Response	Student Response A,B	C,D	E,F	G.H.I	Totals
A,B	85	39	18	16	158
C,D	3	22	4	8	37
E,F	13	12	101	7	133
G,H,I	6	4	4	18	32
Totals	107	77	127	49	360

$X^2 = 244.038$ $p = .9999$

TABLE III B
Percentages of Exact Agreement as Related to Teacher Responses

	Category			
	A,B	C,D	E,F	G,H,I
Percent	53.8	59.5	75.9	56.3

Table IV presents results for the reduction of four categories into two categories. This reduction eliminates bias caused by the classifying of certain occupations as being related or unrelated to training. The greatest source of error is that forty-six students reported by teachers to be available for employment were not available for employment. To counter balance this error thirty-five graduates that were coded by teachers as not being available for employment were working at a job. This is a net error of nine in favor of the category labled available for employment, which might indicate that teachers have a tendency to code students as being available for employment.

TABLE IV
Two Categories

A, B, C, D, Available for employment
E, F, G, H, I Not available for employment

		Student Response		
		A,B,C,D	E,F,G,H,I	Totals
Teacher Response	A,B,C,D	149	46	195
	E,F,G,H,I	35	130	165
	Totals	184	176	360

$X^2 = 108.977$ $p = .9999$

TABLE IV B
Percentages of Exact Agreement as Related to Teacher Responses

	Category	
	A,B,C,D,	E,F,G,H,I
Percent	76.4	78.8

CONFIDENCE INTERVALS ON THE PROPORTION OF DISAGREEMENT

This section describes a different method by which the accuracy of teacher responses may be measured. Confidence intervals will be constructed on the different proportions of disagreement between student and teacher responses. If any of the intervals contain zero, then we may conclude that the two methods are close enough to be the same, i.e. that the two methods aren't significantly different.

Confidence intervals can be obtained by the following equation, which uses the normal approximation since we have a large sample size:

$$q \pm \frac{Z}{\sqrt{n}} \sqrt{q\,(1-q)}$$

Q is the proportion of disagreement between student and teacher responses, *Z* is the appropriate value of a standard normal random variable for the desired level of confidence, and *n* is the sample size.

TABLE V A

99 % Confidence Intervals, Z = 2.58

	q	1-q / q	n / 1-q	$\sqrt{q(1-q)/n}$	Confidence Interval
18 Categories	.694	.306	549	.4608297	(.643, .745)
9 Categories	.553	.447	360	.4971831	(.485, .621)
4 Categories	.372	.628	360	.4833384	(.306, .438)
2 Categories	.225	.775	360	.4175823	(.168, .282)

From the above table, we see that the confidence interval for two categories is the closest to including zero. This would give a maximum value of eighty-three percent for exact agreement and a minimum value of seventeen percent for disagreement. For the actual classification of graduates into eighteen categories, the least we would expect our proportion of disagreement to be is sixty-four percent. This classification would give an exact agreement of thirty-six percent between student and teacher responses.

The following table presents confidence intervals on the proportions of disagreement between student and teacher responses in the 1973 Parallel Follow-up.

TABLE V B

99% Confidence Intervals for 1973 Study, Z = 2.58

	q	1-q	n	$\sqrt{q(1-q)}$	Confidence Interval
9 categories	.499	.501	467	.4999999	(.439, .559)
4 categories	.325	.675	467	.4683749	(.269, .381)
2 categories	.128	.872	467	.3340898	(.088, .168)

When the confidence intervals for the two studies are compared, the confidence intervals for this study are closer to the true value of zero. Therefore, based on the results of using this method to measure the accuracy of teacher responses, it is apparent that teachers did a more accurate job of reporting student status three years ago than they are presently doing.

COMPARISON OF PARALLEL FOLLOW-UP

This study was compared with the Parallel Follow-up conducted in 1973-74. The comparison revealed that present teachers aren't doing as accurate a job of reporting the status of graduates. Data presented in the following table gives the percentages of exact agreement between teachers and students for the two studies. The sample sizes for both studies include only those graduates having student status codes A-I.

TABLE VI

Percentages of Exact Agreement in Nine Codes (A-I).

	Nine Categories	Four Categories	Two Categories	Sample Size
1973-74 Study	50.1%	67.5%	87.2%	467
1976-77 Study	44.7%	62.8%	77.5%	360

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicate that teachers are still doing an adequate job of reporting student status information. Therefore, it is recommended that the teacher follow-up be continued rather than changing to the more costly and time consuming method of student follow-up.

It should be noted that confusion still exists in correctly identifying graduates as working in an occupation for which trained or working in a related occupation. To alleviate this, the guidelines set forth for completing the vo-tech student accounting system should be followed more closely. More care should be taken in reporting the status of graduates as well.

The reporting of accurate data is a vital function of every vocational-technical teacher. To quote Dr. Francis Tuttle, State Director of Vocational and Technical Education, in his introduction to the Guide for Completing the Vo-Tech Student Accounting System:

"Of all the information requested, perhaps none is as important as student data. This data makes up the core of our information system. Student enrollment and follow-up data enable us to prove to the public that we, in vocational education, are doing the job mandated by the Vocational Education Act of 1963. The data . . . is used in program evaluation to calculate placement and program retention. It is used in legislative hearings to document budgetary requests. It is used to prepare annual federal reports required by the 1963 Act. It is used over and over each day by state and local planners to improve vocational education in the state."

APPENDIX I

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE RETURN BY:

ALL RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

GENERAL DIRECTIONS: Please complete all sections of the questionnaire that apply. Your frank responses are appreciated.

I. STATUS

A. Please check the response that best describes your educational status during the 1975-1976 school year.

- ☐ I completed the vocational-technical program.
- ☐ I dropped out of the vocational-technical program.
- ☐ I transferred to another school.

B. Please check the response that best describes your educational or employment status during the week of October 3-9, 1976.

- ☐ Working full-time. Please specify your job title and duties.

  _____
- ☐ Working part-time and not in school.
- ☐ Continuing education. Please specify school and major subject.

  _____
- ☐ Still in high school but not in vocational program.
- ☐ Unemployed and not seeking or interested in employment.
- ☐ Unemployed but seeking employment.
- ☐ Other. Please specify _____

II. EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
A. How would you rate the teaching quality of the instructor in your vocational training program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. How would you rate the knowledge the instructor possessed about the subject?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. How would you rate the extent to which the instructor was up-to-date in the field?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
D. How would you rate the interest shown by the instructor in your work progress in your vocational program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E. How would you rate the interest shown by the instructor in your work and progress after graduation?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

III. VOCATIONAL SELECTION

A. If you could start all over again, would you choose the same vocational training program?

YES ☐ NO ☐

B. How did you learn about the vocational-technical program in which you enrolled?

- ☐ Prospective employers
- ☐ School counselors or teachers
- ☐ Newspaper, TV or Radio
- ☐ VIEW (microfilm job information)
- ☐ Friends or relatives
- ☐ Other _____ (Please Specify)

IF YOU HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED AT ANY TIME SINCE GRADUATION, PLEASE TURN TO THE OTHER SIDE TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE. IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN EMPLOYED, PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE POST-PAID ENVELOPE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED AT ANY TIME SINCE GRADUATION PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

IV. EVALUATION OF TRAINING, EQUIPMENT, AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
A. How would you rate the skill training you received in your vocational-technical program?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
B. How would you rate the equipment used in your training program (as compared to the equipment used on the job)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
C. How would you rate the service of job placement provided by the instructors or vo-tech personnel?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D. Who was the greatest help to you in securing your first job after completion of the training program? (Check one)

☐ Instructor or vo-tech personnel
☐ Private employment agency
☐ Friends or relatives
☐ State employment agency
☐ Other. (Please specify) _____

V. JOB INFORMATION - Please provide the information requested regarding your present, or most recent, job. There is a possibility that your employer will be contacted for information about your vocational training.

Firm name _____
Firm address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Job Title _____
Job Duties _____
_____
_____
Immediate Supervisor _____

☐ Full-time job
☐ Part-time job

How many months have you held your present job? _____ (if you are employed)

Have you taken any on-the-job training or an employer-sponsored training program in this job?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you are no longer on the above job, how many months did you have that job? _____
Was it a summer job? YES ☐ NO ☐

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE POST-PAID ENVELOPE. YOUR COOPERATION IS APPRECIATED.

APPENDIX II

13-001-CX3 (Rev. 5-1-76)

Oklahoma State Department of
Vocational and Technical Education
1515 W. 6th Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074
Student Status Report-Due October 1

Division:
Voc. Class:
School:
Date:

	Soc. Sec. No.	Alpha Letter	Student Name	Occ. Obj. Code	Voc. Class
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					

NOTE:

All students who are not on this printout but are enrolled in your program this year should be recorded on the enrollment form (13-002-DX3).

*Those students who have completed all of the classes in your program or have graduated.

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete this report before the New Enrollment Form.

I. For each student on this report who was in your training program last year and is enrolled in the program again this year:

1. Check to see if the student's social security number is correct. If it is not, write the correct social security number in the space (blocks) provided above the printed social security number.
2. Check to see if the student's occupational objective number has changed. If it has, code the correct occupational objective code (see codes on back of sheet) in the space (blocks) provided above the printed occupational objective code.
3. Write the name and level of the vocational class that the student is attending on the shaded line in the column headed Voc. Class & Level.

II. For each student on this report who was in your training program last year and is not enrolled in the program again this year:

1. In the column headed Alpha Letter, enter the appropriate alpha letter from the COMPLETED block, for a student on this report who has completed the training program.
2. In the column headed Alpha Letter, enter the appropriate alpha letter from the DROPPED block, for a student on this report who has dropped out of the program.
3. In the column headed Alpha Letter, enter the appropriate alpha letter from the LAST block, for a student who has transferred, was not in your training program, or who completed Comprehensive Home Ec.

Alpha Letter

COMPLETED* THE TRAINING PROGRAM AND IS	
A	Working full time--in occupation for which trained
B	Working full time--in Related occupation
C	Working full time--in Unrelated occupation
D	Working part time (does not include those in school full time)
E	Continuing education after high school full time in Related Vocational-Technical Field
F	Continuing education after high school full time in Unrelated Vocational-Technical or other field
G	In high school in other course work
H	Not employed and Not seeking
I	Not employed but is seeking
O	Unknown (completed)

DROPPED OUT OF THE PROGRAM AND IS	
J	Working full time--in field for which trained
K	Working full time--not in Field for which trained
L	Not employed full time
M	Remaining in School
U	Unknown (dropped out)

N	Transferred to another school
P	Was not in training program
Q	Completed Comprehensive Home Ec